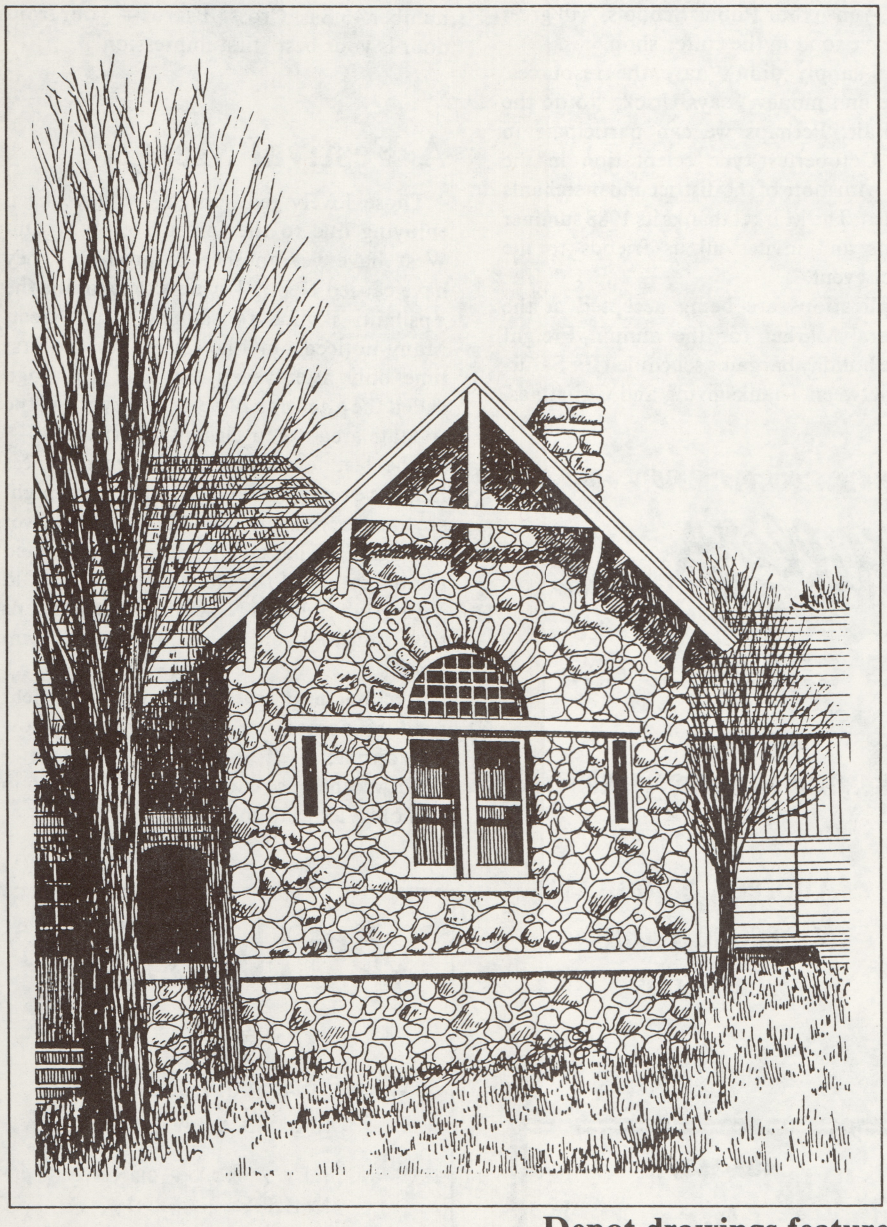
October 1988

Depot Town Rag

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198



Janet Trowbridge Francoeur's drawings —

The MCRR depot at Grass Lake, Michigan was designated by the Detroit architectural firm Spier & Rohns in 1987. It was destroyed by arson recently and now only the lovely stone walls remain.

Guter elected DTA president

Jake Guter was elected Depot Town Association president at the September 15 meeting in the Old Caboose. Serving as his vice president will be Paul Fetters. Secretary, Mary Doll, and treasurer, Judi Monaghan, were each re-elected to their previously held positions.

Jake and his wife, Mary Doll, have lived in the new apartment on the top floor of 29 East Cross for nearly two years. He is an architect for William Kessler and Associates of Detroit whose recent projects included the restoration of Detroit's Fox Theatre, the Marquette Medical Center Facility and a residence in Bloomfield Hills.

Vice President, Paul Fetters, has owned and operated River Art Works at 48 East Cross, for the past ten years.

1989 DTA priorities

determined at the September election meeting:

☐ Reactivate the Depot Town Development Authority (DOA)
☐ Build membership
☐ Review jazz partnership with WEMU
☐ Plan quarterly meetings
☐ Reward volunteers
☐ Redesign the partnership with WEMU for Jazz promotions
☐ Encourage and implement the NIFTY (New initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti) plan to promote unique, small weekend specialty shows beginning with Memorial Day.

Depot drawings featured

With so much interest in the progress on the rehabilitation of the MCRR depot at Ypsilanti, this and the next several month's issues of the Rag will feature drawings of railroad depots around Michigan.

The drawings were first featured in a publication of the Michigan Historial Society and are the works of Janet Trowbridge Francoer. She is an art graduate of Siena Heights College in Adrian and is now a graphic artist in Snowmass, Colorado. We trust she is still finding charming, old edifices in that neighborhood.

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town
Every Wed. & Sat.
8 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Freight House renovation continues

No Fair

The annual October Fall Fair will not be held at the Farmer's Market this year due to extensive repairs underway on the track-side dock. Interior changes, suggested and designed by Ann Arbor's Architects Four consulting firm, have been approved by City Council and are now in progress.

State Agriculture Department standards will be met with the design changes and make County Health Department standards look simple. Recent enforcement of the manner of display and storage for certain perishable food items precipitated the project and provided an opportunity to implement a master plan which could serve both the two-day-a-week Farmer's Market as well as the many other community activities which take place in the building.

Engine Club members expressed disappointment at the cancellation of the usual first Saturday in October event, since that's a prime time to show off their antique gas and steam engines to a most appreciative crowd, but they also recognized that the restoration work is long overdue.

Owners of historic (and other) buildings in Our Town have expressed pleasure and satisfaction at the City's efforts in the Freight House. Too often, municipalities are criticized for enforcing the rules and standards among the citizens while City-owned properties continue to languish in substandard condition. This month's activity in the Freight House should prove to be an act of good faith on the part of City administration.

at the
Ypsilanti Farmers Market
MESSINA'S
CHEESE
483-1480

Market Appreciation Day

The Farmer's Market "Fall Fair" has become a "Market Appreciation Day - 1988," scheduled for Saturday, October 1st. Market Manager, Gary Urick, says that the new event will be smaller and simpler to include autumn produce taste samples, free chicken, turkey and harvest basket giveaways, as well as some craft activity. In addition, a ravamped coffee shop will re-open that day with entertainment, a new menu and a new hostess. Anne Ashton, current food service supervisor at the Ann Arbor Public Schools, will greet and serve food in the coffee shop.

"We simply didn't have the resources, people and money," says Urick, "to do the Fall Fair. Perhaps we can participate in some Octoberfest-type celebration in the future with more of the district and merchants included. The Market thanks its 1988 summer patrons and invites all its friends to the smaller event."

Applications are being accepted at the Farmers' Market for the annual Freight House holiday bargains scheduled for Saturdays between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Miller's
SINCE 1896
ICE CREAM
Open All Year!
42 E. CROSS
HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

Aubree's Saloon
& Second Floor
39 East Cross

483-3637
Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
In Historic Depot Town

Classy glass

Like the traditional Gothic cathedral, Hon's Flower's new stained glass entry is best enjoyed from the inside during the daylight hours. The rich red border and contrasting gold centers create an impressive entrance to this charming flower and gift shop in Depot Town.

The three panels, executed by Winnifred Wyatt of Gregory, have been on custom order since January. Wyatt is known for her work on the windows at St. Luke's Church on North Huron Street.

Few addresses under the US post office jurisdiction are shown off so elegantly as is number 46 East Cross. It's true — your front door is your best "first impression".

A Festival Merger?

Those lovely red sunsets we have been enjoying due to the forest fires Way Out West have yet another by-product. They have caused Depot Towners to examine the Ypsilanti skyline for a new visual treat. Many noticed our fine towers for the first time only after year's Heritage Fest logo called the attention of nearly everyone in the tri-state area to our elegant inheritance.

The last few moments before darkness falls have revealed a steadily improving night skyline, as well. First of all, the water tower was lighted. That creative move precipitated the relighting of the clock tower in the Old Ypsi High School. Now, the Presbyterians have followed suit with lights in their twin towers.

Architectural Note: those openings near tops of domes are called *lanterns.* How appropriate.

Now, what else can we shed light upon in this old Victorian town?

YPSI FOOD COOP
WHOLE NATURAL FOOD IN BULK
OR SMALL QUANTITIES
M.T.Th.F. 10-7 Wed. 10-9 312 N.River
483-1520 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 12-5

B & D Retail
Plumbing & Heating
310 North River 487-1510

Depot Town Art Gallery

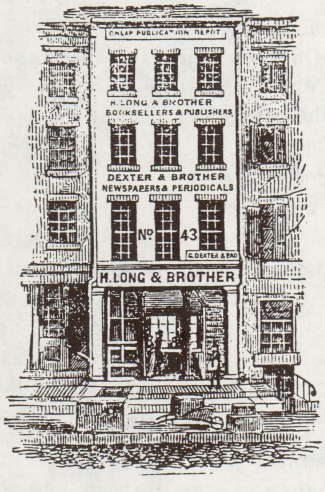
Cooperative thrives

Since its grand opening in August, the co-op art gallery at 19 East Cross has shown a great variety of high quality art to a most appreciative public. Monthly meetings will now be held at the Gallery on the third Monday of each month (October 17, 7:30 -10 p.m.) for interested practicing artists within a one hundred mile radius of Depot Town. There is a $20 membership fee for those who exhibit or wish to receive the Gallery's mailings.

New jury submissions may be made at that time, with old work being picked up on Sunday, October 23, from noon - 6 p.m.

The first exhibition began on Sunday, September 18th and continues through evening and weekend hours until the October 17th session.

The next gala at the Gallery will be a Beaux Arts Ball and costume contest, Saturday, October 29, 7-10 p.m. Tickets and more information are available at the Gallery.



Time's the test, old ways are best

City Body getting back in shape

The Sobbry Brothers showed Depot Town their good intentions when they moved their body business into the district more than a year ago. The top quality renovation of the rear of their buildings cleaned up nearly a quarter of the district in one fell swoop.

This summer's construction season saw them continue a most ambitious project with the removal of the 1940's panels from their first floor facade. Doug Dillon's Suncatcher Construction Company promised a mid-October completion date and the excitement continues every day at that location.

A cream-colored base coat accents the old brick which is laid in one of the most intricate patterns in the block. The ziggurat-like staggering of shallow bricked brackets will soon call attention to the most elegant original cornice remaining in Depot Town. The first floor cornice is completely new, but no one will ever know a year from now because the design is so "right" for the building. The west bay has been taken back to its original design of three windows and an entrance, all dictated by clues which were found beneath the previous "remuddling".

Even the new second storey windows were a surprise. Sidewalk observers predicted they would fit the previous holes (different sizes in each bay), but owners and contractors conspired to return to the original size and shape all the way across the double-bay building. Even the bricked-in window above the center stair entry is opened again.

Good job, City Body. Your example reinforces the ethic of quality historic preservation.

Deadlines pay off in Depot Town

Every worker has found it helpful to know when the job is supposed to be completed, and deadlines or completion dates help in planning the energy, tools and resources of the task.

Much of the labor in this district is geared to completion just before the annual August Heritage Festival and several projects this year slid right up to the finish line —

☐ The east-facing windows on the Sidetrack's upper stories got their final coat of paint just before the big weekend kick-off at Millers Motors. If it takes a party of 600 to get the job done, the local committee will see what it can do to schedule one for any job in the district.

☐ Detroit Edison and other City contractors pulled out the old traffic lights and poles at almost the same time, and cement was poured around the corner of Cross and River Streets during the opening day of Festival. By the time the Starlight Street Dance took place that Friday night, people were walking on the new sidewalks as if they'd been there forever.

☐ Signs warning of "Construction Ahead" are still held in place with sandbags in mid-block, so that may be a clue that the "walk/don't walk" signs may still be activated before winter.

☐ One of the vestiges of Festival debris was the two white wire chairs set up near the Cross Street Bridge in front of Thercom's headquarters to watch the Heritage Parade. Chairs, empty soft drink cups and styrofoam wrappers remained in place until mid-September. Maybe they were reserving this prime location for the 1988 Parade?

"The Mean Bean"
at 17 East Cross
in historic
Depot Town

Sidetrack
Good Food, Good Drinks,
Good Times
56 East Cross 483-1053

City Body, Inc.
20 East Cross
Front Alignments
Special - **$24.95**

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Auto Electric
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Ypsilanti, MI 48198
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CUSTOM FRAMING
DESIGNER MATS
48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN
482-8785

JOA (Jazz Operating Agreement) sought in Depot Town

The newly elected DTA officers have undertaken to re-design the partnership with public radio station WEMU for the sponsoring of musical events in the district. Eight of concert experience together include the Frog Island Jazz Festival, the Winter Jazz Series in the Freight House and Heritage Jazz Competiton.

Outgoing DTA president, Tom Dodd, said, "soaring costs for liquor liability insurance have made any profits to the Association neglible. And volunteers seem to be getting harder and harder to come by. We're just going to have to find a new formula with our friends at the radio station." The new DTA officers have targeted the regular October meeting for approval lof a new plan, in order to begin plans toward next year's schedule of events.

You can ride all day On the AATA

. . . and you can catch the bus right here in Depot Town

New routes and schedules have been posted by the local bus line which is subsidized by Our Government, but named for the town just west of Ypsilanti — and services from this quarter are much improved and expanded.

Two AATA routes serve Depot Town:

Catch the **Huron River bus** is Depot Town every half hour from 6:45 a.m. to 10:14 p.m. weekdays, 8:45 a.m.-6:15 p.m. Saturday, and 8:15 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Sundays.

The **Ypsilanti Propect MacArthur bus** also goes east and west on Cross Street weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

Both lines connect with Ann Arbor-bound buses at the Ferris depot, next to the Post Office. Ask for a "transfer" as you board the first bus and you can travel as far as Dexter, Chelsea and Saline.

Board the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority wherever you see these signs. The closest Depot Town stop is right next to the mailbox near the railroad tracks - by the big bicycle rack.

Patronize The Merchants That Bring You The

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Depot Town Rag

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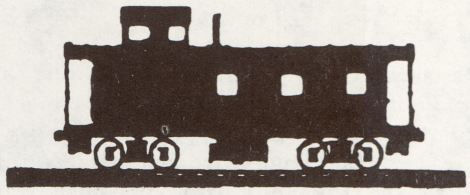

D.T.A. 18 August 1988

Communications: An open invitation to the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce After Hours Business Mixer, Sept. 21. It will be a good opportunity to get acquainted with the business community and with the new Chamber membership chair, Denise Chittum.

Guests: Larry and Councilmember Linda Hummel

Treasury: No report as treasurer, Judi Monaghan, is just getting back on ger foot after surgery.

Foundation: No report.

NIFTY: No report.

Membership/Volunteerism: No report.

Budget/Events: Thanks to dedicated volunteers, we can look foward to a smooth and celebratory Heritage Festival. It is unfortunate that clean-up volunteers were nowhere to be found, however, a mutually beneficial donation agreement was reached with Serenity House and, yes, Depot Town will be clean as ever after the festivities.

Festival of Lights chair, Carolyn McKeever, wishes to remind you that all "subscriptions" to trees are up this year — including DTA's. Carolyn will be looking for volunteers in preparation for the lighting of Riverside Park. Contact Carolyn in regards to the "screw in" party and other volunteer activities @ 483-4256.

Caboose: Your unique event rented @ $25 per event w/$10 key deposit. Contact Gary McKeever @ 483-4256.

Antique Engine Club: Early Engine Expo will reappear at the Heritage Festival. A steamboat cruise will follow.

Engineering Society: Neighborhood kids are looking to conduct a good business doing your jobs. Contact them by leaving word @ The Old Caboose.

Merchants: Paul Fetters reports that the area lighting plan is "on the wire". Questions addressing its feasibility/approval and funding will be resolved by the end of August and reported at next month's DTA meeting.

Other business:

- The City Survey of our backyard (Cross Street's north alley) will be finished by the end of August. We are hoping this many contribute to a creative solution to our unsightly dumpsters.

- DTA president, Tom Dodd, will submit a letter to the City Council requesting to reactivate Depot Town's Downtown Development Authority.

- The Nominating Committee, Sandy French, Loren Hansen, and Judi Monaghan, will be submitting nominations for DTA officers. A list of nominees will be posted ten days before the election, which will be held at the next DTA meeting, Thursday, September 15th.

Best Yet Award: McKeever's beautification compaign of honey locusts and cottoneaster at Cross Street's north side alley. Many thanks also go to Lynn Tabor for a beautiful living memorial to her late husband, George Tabor.

The Golden Goose Award: For sidewalks left in disrepair and those notorious Caboose - climbers.

Due to early publication of the September issue of The Rag for the closing of Heritage Festival, both the August and September Depot Town Association minutes appear in this, the October issue.

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

The Depot Town Association, Inc.,
Jake Guter, President
The Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

City Radiator

110 North River **483-2248**

HANSEN'S
STANDARD
PRINTING
35 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
483-0339

Dealing with the dailies

The news stands in front of the Old Town Restaurant offer up a growing variety of reading material to Depot Towners. *The Ypsilanti Press, The Ann Arbor News, The New York Times, USA Today,* and *The Detroit Free Press* stand in their coin operated boxes awaiting the quarters, nickles and dimes of their readers. *Plain Truth* is free, and so is the nearby aldulerated version in *The Depot Town Rag.* The Depot town Association often stacks its (free!) monthly *Rag* on a cardboard box near these "big guys" just to feel a professional association with other journalists.

Herwith is a suggestion to our readers on how to deal with our differences:

Publishers of **daily** newspapers are so pressured by the exigencies of time and finance that they often resort to printing only bad news in order to meet their deadlines. Editors of **weeklies** find the pace a bit more humane and often include at least a few sunny items about the positive qualities of human nature. **Monthlies,** however, enjoy such a leisurely pace that they can print the stuff of warmth and love, long-range-weather predictions and generally good news for at least some small segment of the world's population. **Annual** publications, it seems, are limited to reports and statistics, while school versions are stored on upper bookshelves only to be pulled down the week before the class reunion. Now, that's long-range readership.

Jo Collins Mathis, of *The Ypsilanti Press,* has discovered the luxury of avoiding daily deadlines and now treats us with her sunny view of things only on Mondays. We appreciate that, but why doesn't editor, Joe Matasich, assign someone like her to the other six issues of the week? Mathis' outlook has brightened and she has become another of the glorious pleasant and intimate members of the Ypsilanti community. Her colleagues would do well to emulate her.

The minions from *The Ann Arbor News,* still determined to live up to their "biggest in Washtenaw County" slogan, carry a more stern view (we chided them on that several years ago with little effect.)

Obviously, publishing is a dirty business, if we can believe the condition of our hands and clothing after perusing their daily product. Pity their frenetic production pace. Their rush around the press room, fast ride in delivery trucks, hurridly piling up at newstands, and quick slide into our hands each day even leaves its mark on the arm of our favorite reading chair. And on the table cloth and all over those new trousers we were going to keep looking like new for at least another month.

Unless you have a brother-in-law in the cleaning business, we suggest you warm the dailies in the micro-wave for twenty minutes before reading it. Too-fast publication schedules just don't allow time for the ink to dry before delivery. And warmed-over news still holds its flavor after twenty minutes.

Clearly, the dailies are a dirty business. Monthlies, on the other hand, seldom rub off on the reader, except inside the head where it doesn't show.

City's alley study compete

City Hall's Mike Ager reports the completion of the three-year study of the property lines in Depot Town's north-side alley. DTA officials, long concerned about the inability of fire engines to clear the hap-hazard parking in that space, laid the problem smack in the new City Manager's lap three years ago. Now that Matt Hennessee is leaving that job, he promised the report would be finished before his exit from Ypsilanti.

Mike Ager, lately in charge of the City's DPW and a jazz pianist who has performed in early Depot Town events, was given the task of monitoring the study and reports that it is finally completed and on view in his office at City Hall.

"The alley really doesn't belong to the City," says Ager. "But we still can find ways to post and control parking in that space."

Ager has been invited to bring his findings to both the October meetings of the Foundation and Association. Adjacent property owners, business, residents and clientele may wish to attend.

Tel. (313) 483-5870

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GENERAL STORE
A Blend of Past & Present
With an Eye on The Future

21 E. Cross St. • Depot Town

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross

Olde Towne
Coin & Gold
24 E. CROSS STREET
YPSILANTI, MI 48198
(313) 483-6155

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT
651 Rice Street
(just north of the Farmers' Market in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town
Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Collecting newspaper, glass, used motor oil and ferrous cans
A non-profit organization

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

Red Rooster Pizza
37 E. CROSS
483-4555

Ike's Depot Town Barbershop
40 East Cross • 483-6300

Big Bob's Magazines
Magazines, Comics, Posters
50 East Cross 485-4930

October 1988

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following meetings for the good of the block:

Foundation
8 p.m. Thursday, 10/7
in The Old Caboose

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 10/21
in The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 10/28
in The Freight House

Artists & Artisans
Coffee House every Sunday
at the Depot Town Art Gallery
Artist's meeting
7:30 p.m. Monday, 10/17

D.T.A. 15 September 1988

Guests:

Andrea Brown - City Planner, City of Ypsilanti
Alice Burg - City of Ypsilanti
Charles Soule - 4th Ward Councilmember, City of Ypsilanti
Gary Urich - Manager, Ypsilanti Farmers' Market
Margaret Harner - Owner of The Teachers Shop

Announcements

Our City representatives relayed communication from Mike Ager (DTPW) indicating that our **backyard survey of the north side of Cross Street** is complete and available for viewing at his office (please call first). Mike Ager is cordially invited to October's Foundations and DTA meetings (the 6th and 20th, respectively) to review the survey and its implications.

Andrea Brown and Alice Burg unvieled the proposed new **Depot Town Master Plan** and invited those present at the DTA meeting to offer input, analysis and suggestions. The resulting plan calls for the institution of B2C zoning throughout Depot Town in order to support and promote the existing multi-story mixed use area.

Also included in the plan's objectives are the research of reactivating Depot Town's **Downtown Development Authority** (DDA) and related Tax Increment Financing (TILFA), tax recapturing and the realization of the Huron River's natural and recreating value. The DTA members present voted unanimously to endorse the plan (w/amendments). The final Master Plan was presented to City Council Wednesday, September 21.

Gary Urich announced that the **Freight House Master Plan** will be reviewed at their next meeting.

Treasurer: no report.

RAGTIME
More authentic
than ever before
Down in Depot Town

Standing Committees:

Membership/Volunteerism: Tom Dodd has agreed to assume the responsibility for returning, attaining and training our volunteer force. Good luck, Captain Dodd.

Hon's
Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross 482-2124

WE love to BUY ANTIQUES
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E Cross. • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Jim MacDonald's Antiques
Apple Annie's
Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

Something For Everyone
Cross Street Antiques
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Ypsilanti, Mich.
Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5
Phone (313) 482-4525

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 square feet of dealers
412 North River • 484-4288

Budget/Events: Carolyn McKeever reports that preliminary figures indicated a $300 loss for DTA incurred by the EMUK/DTA co-sponsored events. In looking forward to self-sustaining co-sponsorships, the DTA will be exploring and proposing changes to be made in our "Jazz Operating Agreement." Suggestions are welcome and a decision will be made at the October DTA meeting.

NIFTY (New initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti): Jerry Meadows addressed the needs, goals objectives and strategies for Depot Town to become a tourist Mecca. This NIFTY proposal calls for a weekly series of small specialty shows during the summer months. An implementation plan is being developed with the possible involvement of EMU's Business Administration Department.

Caboose: Enjoy an engaging atmosphere for your next event: rent the Caboose for only $25 per, with a $10 key deposit. Contact Gary McKeever @ 483-4245.

2nd Vice Presidents:

Foundation -

Artists & Artisans - action continues at the Depot Town Art Gallery, 19 East Cross Street.

Antique Engine Club -

Engineering Society - Neighborhood clean-up kids for hire. Just leave word at the Old Caboose or stop by the next DTA meeting.

Antique Dealers -

Other business:

Councilmember, Chuck Soule, delivered a **Neighborhood Builders' Alliance Grant** pre-application. Out-going DTA president, Tom Dodd, will get out the application and see if Depot Town qualifies for any monies.

This year's **annual report for non-profit organizations** is being filed w/the State.

Nominating Committee members, Judi Monaghan, Loren Hansen and Sandee French, were successful in their search for candidates with results as follows:

President, Jacob Guter and Paul Fetters
Secretary, Mary Doll
Treasurer, Judi Monaghan

A run-off ballot was cast for president, with Jacob Guter winning the office, and second place Paul Fetters assuming the duties of vice president. A unanimous ballot was cast and all were elected. Judi Monaghan was elected *in absentia*

Priorities for the new year were bandied about (see related article). The first priority being to thank outgoing officers for a fine and fun year.

The Golden Goose Award was given to Festival pushers who got too pushy.

The Best Yet Award went to Margaret Harner's spectacular new paint job on the Heritage Square Building (Teachers Shop, et al.)